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ABSTRACT

This study, the second of 2 conducted by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) on the governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program, describes the growth and development of collaborative decision-making in 4 of the initial grantee communities after 2 years of funding. IEL's first report asked the original 99 grantees: What roles do cross-sector partnerships play in implementing 21st CCLC programs? This follow-up study asks: To what extent have grantee communities developed the collaborative capacity needed to run effective programs and to recognize and move toward accomplishing the full potential of the 21st CCLC program? Findings suggest that formal, cross-sector governing bodies have functioned weakly at the community level, if at all. In addition, a 3-year grant period and an emphasis on programming have left grantees with little time or incentive to develop long-range governing strategies. The report calls on the U.S. Department of Education to continue to request 5-year grant authority from Congress for subsequent 21st CCLC grant competitions and to give priority to applicants with demonstrated collaborative capacity. It also recommends that the grant provide technical assistance to teams at the site level where it is not currently provided and could make an immediate difference. IEL's experience strongly suggests that collaborative governance is necessary both to build effective school-community initiatives and to transform 21st CCLCs from successful after-school programs to a sustainable system of community schools. Appendixes include: Year One Findings and Recommendations: A Recap and Resource Material Strengthening Partnerships: Community School Assessment Checklist. (DFR)

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School-Community Partnerships In Support of Student Learning

Taking a Second Look at the Governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

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School-Community Partnerships In Support of Student Learning

Taking a Second Look at the Governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

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with the support of the
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

About IEL

For more than thirty-five years, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)—a non-profit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, DC—has worked to achieve better results for children and youth. At the heart of IEL's effectiveness is a unique ability to bring people together to identify and resolve issues across policy, program, and sector boundaries. As a natural outgrowth of IEL's work, diverse networks have been created and nurtured.

Today, IEL is working to help individuals and institutions increase their capacity to work *together.* We are building and supporting a cadre of diverse leaders, strengthening the capacity of education and related systems, and informing the development and implementation of policies. Our efforts are focused through four programs of work: *Developing Leaders; Strengthening School–Family–Community Connections; Connecting and Improving Systems that Serve Children and Youth;* and *Improving Preparation for Work.*

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Preface

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) has been reviewing the governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program since the first 99 programs were funded in 1998. Under the direction of the late Jacqueline P. Danzberger, IEL gained early governance impressions by surveying and conducting follow-up discussions with the initial 21st CCLC grantees. We reported on that work in our March 2000 report, *"Governance of 21st Century Community Learning Centers: First Year Findings and Recommendations."*

The governance modes described in this report—*21st Century School–Community Partnerships in Support of Student Learning—Taking a Second Look at the Governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program*—are beginning to mitigate the institutional separation that all too often characterizes school–community relationships. Although the issues play out differently in each of the four sites profiled, the analyses reflect the difficulty of changing *"educentric"* attitudes and governance patterns and the complexities of fostering meaningful and sustainable collaboration.

The report sheds light on some of the important dynamics of school–community relationships. Among its other contributions, the 21st CCLC program is illuminating the factors that facilitate or deter collaboration. Our nation's demographic realities and the needs of increasingly diverse student bodies and parent populations ultimately will compel new models of relationships between school systems and community groups.

This report was developed by a staff team representing IEL's varied programs of work: Marty J. Blank, Betty Hale, Naomi Housman (who served as project coordinator), Barbara Kaufmann, Monica Martinez, Barbara McCloud, Laura Samberg, and Sharon Walter. The IEL team used Mrs. Danzberger's work as the basis of on-site discussions to obtain on-the-ground perspectives of governance in four distinct 21st CCLC sites.

The support provided by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation enabled IEL to gain a better understanding of the governance of the 21st CCLC program. More importantly, this support is making it possible for us to share insights and ideas with those who daily work to improve educational outcomes for our nation's children and young people. IEL believes that the insights and information in this report are relevant to a broad audience of stakeholders: policymakers, practitioners, parents, school-based people, advocates, community leaders, and funders.

Michael D. Usdan, President
June 2001

Introduction

The 21st Century has finally arrived. With it has come a "new economy"—full of demands, expectations, and opportunities. We are only beginning to see its effects on every aspect of society and on the lives of our children and families. But one thing is clearer than ever before: academic achievement has become a proxy measure and a powerful predictor of young people's success. Schools know they must find ways to reach all students.

We know from the research that school performance and long hours of unsupervised time with friends closely predict whether young people will engage in high risk behaviors such as substance abuse, use of weapons, attempted suicide, or early sex.[1] Living in poverty increases these potential risks; over the last decade, the number of children living in working poor families has increased by more than one-third.[2] Today, not all children can make real choices about their educational futures, especially in inner city and rural areas. Too many do not have access to the basic conditions that make academic achievement possible: a safe place to live and learn, motivating experiences, good health care, and encouragement and guidance from a strong network of social supports.

Many strategies have been employed to improve schooling and to expand safe and constructive opportunities for young people to learn—before, during, and after the regular school day. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC), administered by the U.S. Department of Education, has strongly encouraged and supported programs that focus on student learning and that improve student outcomes. Increasingly, schools are working with parents to design such efforts and engaging the broader resources of community partners. Most innovations concentrate on helping students develop core knowledge, critical problem-solving skills, and fluency in language and math, but the best also develop positive habits of mind and heart: a love of learning, a sense of personal responsibility, and active membership in the community.

Funded by the Congress for $40 million in FY98 and increased to $846 million in FY01, the 21st CCLC program's immediate objective, as articulated by the U.S. Department of Education, is to help school districts create community learning centers—stimulating, safe, and cost-effective after-school, weekend, or summer havens for children, youth, and their families. The Department provides a flexible source of funding which, when combined with other school and community resources, can permanently redefine the ways in which multiple institutions in the community work together in support of student learning. The 21st CCLC initiative begins as a program, but has the potential to go much further.

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[1] Laura Sessions Stepp, "New Study Questions Teen Risk Factors," *The Washington Post*, 11/30/00, p. A1.

[2] Kids Count 2000, Annie E. Casie Foundation, Baltimore, MD (2000). www.kidscount.org

An interest in collaboration, particularly for the purpose of sharing resources, was evident in the legislation that established the 21st CCLC program. Although only schools could receive funds, applicants were expected to work with community partners "for the purpose of meeting the needs of, and expanding the opportunities available to, the residents of the communities served by such schools." Applicants were also required to describe "the collaborative efforts to be undertaken by community-based organizations, related public agencies, or other appropriate organizations." Such collaborations require new ways of decision-making in local communities. In short, they anticipate new governance arrangements. The Institute for Educational Leadership's (IEL) work on the governance of 21st CCLC is intended to help achieve this vision.

This study, the second of two conducted by IEL on the governance of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, describes the growth and development of collaborative decision-making in four of the initial grantee communities after two years of funding. IEL's first report asked the original 99 grantees: ***What roles do cross-sector partnerships play in implementing 21st CCLC programs?*** In this follow-up study, we visited four 21st CCLC program sites to obtain answers to the question: ***To what extent have grantee communities developed the collaborative capacity needed to run effective programs and to recognize and move toward accomplishing the full potential of the 21st CCLC program?*** In asking this question, our intent was not to evaluate the effectiveness of individual grantee communities or sites; our intent was to learn from their experience and to identify ways to support their continued progress, with particular emphasis on the governance issues raised by these collaborative arrangements.

This four-part report is directed at policymakers, funders, practitioners, advocates, parents, and community leaders to help them begin to understand and strengthen their own current efforts; to think about how to meet the long range potential of the 21st CCLC program; and to steer more sharply in that direction. Part One defines and draws distinctions between single agency and collaborative governance and describes IEL's second look at 21st CCLC governance. Part Two uses a collaborative change framework—Together We Can—to highlight the growth and development of collaborative governance capacity in the four 21st CCLC sites and to illustrate the sites' achievements and challenges. Part Three presents conclusions and recommendations. Part Four offers guidance to help schools and communities achieve the larger potential for change by using the assets of 21st CCLC to create comprehensive community schools. It includes resources to help partnerships focus on, assess, and improve the quality of their collaborative efforts.

Summary

In Year Two, formal, cross-sector governing bodies created expressly for the 21st CCLC grant have functioned weakly at the community level, if at all. Single agency governance with cooperative involvement of other stakeholders characterized most 21st CCLCs in Year One. Because school districts as single agencies receive and are held accountable for 21st CCLC funds, it is not surprising that they have retained primary authority for the governance of the program Typically, school districts and school boards control decisions with regard to overall policy, and principals usually have the final say at the site level.

In addition, a three-year grant period and an emphasis on programming have left grantees with little time or incentive to develop long-range governing strategies. Progress toward cross-sector authority and accountability has been encouraged by the presence of a pre-existing collaborative culture, personal commitment among stakeholders, and involvement of established coalitions. At the site level, cross-sector teams exercise somewhat more decision-making influence. In general, however, they do not receive enough cross-sector guidance and policy support from community-level governing bodies, technical assistance, and staff support to adequately integrate, expand, and sustain successful approaches. Treating the grant as a stand-alone project results in the phenomenon of "*projectitis*."

Among its recommendations, this report calls on the U.S. Department of Education to continue to request five-year grant authority from Congress for subsequent 21st CCLC grant competitions and to give priority to applicants with demonstrated collaborative capacity. It also recommends that the grant provide technical assistance to teams at the site level where it is not currently provided and could make an immediate difference.

IEL's experience strongly suggests that collaborative governance is necessary both to build effective school-community initiatives and to transform 21st CCLCs from successful after-school programs to a sustainable system of community schools. Year Two summary findings and recommendations are presented on the following page.

Year Two Findings and Recommendations

Year Two Findings

- Grantee efforts have been highly project-oriented. Meeting grant requirements has left grantees with little time or incentive to develop more comprehensive, long-range, community-school strategies.
- Regardless of the composition of 21st CCLC partnerships, when disputes arise, authority and accountability reside with the school district, as the grantee and lead agency. Cross-sector groups are advisory and do not make binding policy/program decisions.
- Partners at both the community and site level primarily provide services and give advice. Site-team recommendations made by partners are often influential, but most teams do not have the staff support or community leadership necessary to develop integrated change strategies or to sustain successful approaches.
- At the community level, formal, cross-sector oversight bodies created expressly for the 21st CLCC grant have functioned weakly. There is evidence that communities, which already have a strong collaborative culture, engage in ad hoc efforts among acknowledged stakeholders and established coalitions are more likely to move toward collaborative governance and to capitalize on the long-term potential of the 21st CCLC initiative.
- Grantees are wisely tying 21st CLCC activities to direct improvement in school achievement but are not emphasizing their impact on interim indicators like improved attendance, behavior, and parent involvement that are necessary to create the conditions that lead to increased school achievement.
- Developing parent leadership and community capacity is not a first order priority despite the potent, positive effect engaged parents have on school climate and parent-staff relationships.
- Complex political, socio-economic, and institutional factors, including racial, regional, and ethnic divisions—the silent issues—have affected the development of 21st CCLC in all four communities and must be addressed.

Recommendations

- Continue to request Congress to approve five-year grant authority for the U.S. Department of Education to use in funding subsequent 21st CCLC grant competitions. Give priority to applicants with proven collaborative capacity.
- Build technical assistance for site and community teams into existing and future 21st CCLC grants and expand ongoing efforts by technical assistance providers and local intermediaries.
- Work with communities to establish interim indicators of academic success like attendance, behavior, and parent involvement, but help them stay focused on long-range improvement in school-wide achievement.
- Improve local capacity and community support by increasing leadership and skills training for parents and grass roots leaders and by increasing their participation on site teams and community-level oversight groups.
- Encourage grantees to collect data and to communicate information strategically.
- Develop grant materials and technical assistance that emphasize the 21st CCLC initiative as a funding stream with the capacity to create comprehensive systems of academically excellent and financially sustainable community schools.

PART ONE

Governance—Defining Our Terms

The terms governance and collaborative governance are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. In general, governance is an umbrella term that refers to the structure and process of how enterprises make administrative, operational, and fiscal decisions. It asks: Who's in charge? Who's accountable? Effective governance provides general oversight, sets policy direction, defines measures of accountability, and ensures effective day-to-day management.

In initiatives like the 21st CCLC that operate at multiple sites, the governance functions occur at both the community and the site level. Decisions about general oversight, policy direction, and accountability of the initiative take place at the site or community level. Management decisions are often best made at the site level. All of these decision-making functions can be performed either under the auspices of a single agency or under that of a collaborative partnership.

Single Agency Governance

In most organizations, governance is conducted under the auspices of a single institution. Decisions about general direction, policy and accountability are made "in-house" by the chief executive and governing body of that organization. In school districts, the CEO is the superintendent and the governing body is the school board.

Sometimes, specific management activities in areas like program, personnel, communication or finance might be contracted out to another organization. This is usually done when it is deemed the best way to get the job done and the most efficient use of the organization's resources. An organization might seek advice from other organizations, but their input is not binding. Whether these cooperative arrangements are fee-based or provided as in-kind contributions, overall authority and accountability for results is retained by the lead agency. Entities that offer these services do so to meet their own goals and are not required to make fundamental changes in the way they do business. In many cases, however, the goals of cooperating partners might overlap and complement each other.

Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance refers to a closely linked set of oversight, management and site-level activities in which a broad cross-section of stakeholders share authority, resources and accountability for agreed upon goals. They use consensus-based decision-making to create new policies and practices at both the initiative and site level that no single institution would be able to develop on its own.

The essential feature of collaborative governance is that partners represent multiple interests and are accorded equal power and authority regardless of the resources they bring to the table. The essential purpose of collaborative governance is to achieve results that no single institution or segment of the community could achieve acting alone. In order to do so, partners must clarify their roles and expectations, be willing to adjust their own policies when necessary to solve problems, and share resources and accountability to meet agreed upon results.

Because the 21st CCLC initiative is funded at the community level but operates at one or more school sites, decision-making is necessary at both levels. In a collaborative governing model, a cross-sector group at the community level sets a general direction, agrees on broad goals and outcomes, and develops the partnerships and agreements necessary to permanently fund and sustain the initiative. At the site level, cross-sector site teams decide how best to achieve those goals locally. In addition, cooperative arrangements with partners are often established to ensure more effective day-to-day management of program, personnel and finances. Establishing collaborative governance is a demanding and long-term venture.

IEL's Governance Studies

IEL began its study of 21st CCLC governance in 1998 with the 99 first-round grantees as they approached the end of their first year of funding. The first study looked at what cross-sector oversight bodies do and the extent to which they made decisions in five areas: program, finance, personnel, communications and accountability. The study concluded that, "while the majority of grantees could point to some kind of cross-sector groups they termed governing bodies," most of the entities operated in an advisory, rather than a decision-making, capacity. Decisions were made primarily under the auspices of a single agency—the schools—reflecting the educational focus of the initiative and the role of school districts as grantees and fiscal agents.

The limited degree of cross-sector collaboration IEL observed was sobering but not unexpected. Cross-sector relationships strong enough to support collaborative governance develop slowly and usually require repeated opportunities for partners to work together in smaller ventures. In addition, creating a strong school-community governing mechanism was not a stated priority of most grantees nor, for that matter, was it an explicit requirement of authorizing legislation or guidelines. Finally, the basic conditions necessary for effective collaboration were not widely present, including: clear

roles and shared expectations; willingness for partner institutions to adjust their own policies when necessary to solve problems; and shared allocation of resources to meet agreed upon results. A recap of IEL's first study is presented in Appendix I on page 37.

Taking a Second Look at 21st CCLC Governance

The current report describes 21st CCLC governance at the end of the second year of project implementation (May 2000). It narrows the wide-angle lens used in the first report to capture a fuller picture of governance activity in four 21st CCLC sites and communities. In taking a second look at governance, IEL shifted the focus from the structure of governing bodies to the growth and development of collaborative governance processes.

Denver, CO; Plainfield, NJ; St. Louis, MO; and a consortium of four school districts in 21st CCLC programs in and around Humphreys County, MS were chosen to reflect an urban/rural mix and to enable IEL to collect observations about governance from diverse community contexts. Sites were not selected on the basis of any perceived strength or weakness in their programs or governance structures or functions. All four sites completed IEL's first phase survey, agreed to host a site visit, and provided opportunities for IEL staff to engage in dialogue with school personnel, community partners, 21st CCLC staff, parents and stakeholders.

IEL staff teams visited each grantee site in the spring of 2000. Teams talked with staff, community partners, principals, teachers, parents and students over a day and a half period and visited some, but not all, program sites. Teams collected information on programs, community involvement, results and strategic plans to continue the project after funding ended. They also looked for evidence related to governance concerns identified in the first report.

We did not expect to find fully effective, collaborative governance at any site. Instead, we looked for growth and development in collaborative relationships and progress toward the long-range objective of 21st CCLC—namely the creation of comprehensive strategies to create new kinds of community-school relationships.

21st CCLC Site Profiles

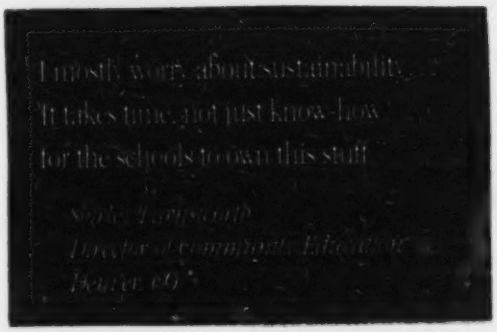
The following section of the report provides profiles of the four sites' 21st CCLC initiatives. Each profile briefly describes the school and community context, the program(s), governance at the community and site level, and offers brief notes on results and sustainability.

Denver 21st Century Community Learning Center

Denver (CO) Public Schools—Spring 2000
IEL Staff: Monica Martinez and Barbara McCloud

The School and Community Context

Denver, the capital of Colorado, is an economically vibrant transportation, industrial, and communications center currently enjoying low unemployment. The city has a diverse population: from 12 percent to 23 percent of the half-million residents are Mexican American and approximately 13 percent are African American. The Denver Public School (DPS) system serves approximately 70,000 ethnically diverse students, primarily from low and middle-income families. Only one part of the city serves predominantly white and affluent students.



Denver has long been a community-focused and community-serving school district. Community education centers were instituted by the DPS in 1974, most successfully in middle-income neighborhoods where families could afford to pay a fee for service. In 1995, a new superintendent reinforced this priority by establishing Neighborhood Centers (NCs)—a strategy wherein the schools served the social, educational, vocational, and health needs of the community. The NCs offered opportunities for parents, the community, and students, generally through enrichment activities before and after school. The NCs are guided by a Community Advisory Council (CAC) that may function as a sub-group of a Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) team, the governing entity required in every public school in Denver. CDM teams are comprised of school and community representatives and reflect the school system's efforts to ensure community representation and involvement in the schools. In 1999, a new superintendent and the school board revised the system's priorities and, once again, reinforced the District's focus on connecting its schools to the communities they served.

21st CCLC Strategic Plan

Currently, the Denver Public Schools' community goal is to energize parents, staff, community, business leaders, and elected officials to take responsibility for helping schools improve student achievement. The focus is on involving the community *in* the school; helping parents help their children excel in school; and expanding partnerships to increase school readiness. In the 1990s, both the superintendent of the Denver

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Public Schools and the school board have provided the leadership necessary to continue the strong tradition of implementing programs that serve the needs of the communities in which the students reside.

The District realized that federal funding offered a vehicle through which current services to the community could be provided and, ultimately, expanded. In 1998 the 21st CCLC grant was targeted to three middle schools (Skinner, Lake, and Horace Mann); Lake and Horace Mann already operated as Neighborhood Centers (NCs). But, support from the grant enabled all three schools to keep their doors open when school closed, and to offer free classes and activities for youth and/or families and community members. The 1999 21st CCLC grant enabled the school district to establish NCs at four additional middle schools (Martin Luther King, Jr., Smiley, Cole, and Gove), and at four elementary schools. Two of the 21st CCLC sites, Lake and Cole Schools, also receive funding as "Beacon Schools," a leadership development for youth model in which a local community-based organization staffs the program.

21st CCLC Program(s)

Each of the eleven 21st CCLC sites in Denver is unique and provides varied services and activities that are based on the perceived needs of the students and the community, and all programs are a result of a focus chosen by the school and key community partners. For example, at the Horace Mann Neighborhood Center School, the focus is on adult needs including ESL, literacy education, and participation from community organizations. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School site serves six elementary schools and has targeted its efforts on remedial efforts to help young people move to full proficiency on statewide reading and math tests. The Skinner School's 21st CCLC program has worked with and been supported by various businesses or organizations including Western Area Power, Regis University, The Denver Fire Department, Metropolitan State College, and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

In general, the 21st CCLC sites offer after-school literacy and tutoring, summer enrichment and Saturday School activities; opportunities for parent involvement, and community access to school libraries and other facilities. However, all sites are designed and mandated to create safe and nurturing environments in which relationships with caring adults can strengthen positive development and academic achievement. Two sites were originally established as Beacon Schools.

21st CCLC Governance

There is no formal, community-level oversight body responsible for governing the entire 21st CCLC initiative, and the Denver Public Schools' long tradition of school-based community education programming with multiple funders has produced governance structures that are different at each of the eleven 21st CCLC sites. Each site's governing entity operates in a different context, plays different roles, and focuses on different issues.

In those sites that were already operating as Neighborhood Centers, there are advisory councils that address a range of issues, including fiscal oversight, hiring of staff, and budget allocation, and that interact and work closely with the site coordinator. At program sites that also operate as "Beacon Schools," the requirements for and responsibilities of the advisory council are mandated by the requirements of the funding source. At yet other sites, the advisory council may be the previously mentioned CDM that is required in all schools. At least one site has no formal advisory council and the site coordinators are satisfied with this arrangement. Most of these governing bodies are advisory in nature and tend not to focus on day-to-day management decisions. Rather, they tend to work with the site coordinators to help frame the short- and long-term program agendas.

There is not much formal collaboration among the multiple programs in Denver. The respective governing bodies do not get together, and there is not a larger "body" or committee that is responsible for overseeing the various and varied 21st CCLC activities. However, there is a core group of people in Denver that knows what is occurring at all of the different sites. This group includes high-level representatives from such important organizations as: the Rose Community Foundation, the Mile High United Way, the Community Education Office at DPS, the Piton Foundation, and the DPS School Board. Currently, this *ad hoc* body is trying to establish a formal governing group that could coordinate, oversee and fiscally manage the community education programs, host cross-site meetings, and develop ways to sustain the 21st CCLC program and related initiatives.

21st CCLC Results/Sustainability

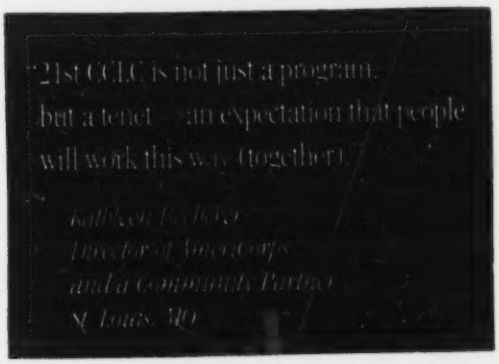
The Denver Public School system has been and is a strong player in the efforts to connect the schools to the communities they serve. The system has been strategic in its efforts to use the 21st CCLC funds to institutionalize the good services and activities already being provided in some schools and, equally important, to initiate such services and activities in additional schools. Staff are confident that the school district will continue the funding for 21st CCLCs after federal funding ends because extended day strategies are central to the superintendent's plan for raising student achievement. Key stakeholders are becoming more strategic in their efforts to ensure continued financial support. They now understand and are pushing for rigorous evaluation to collect data that can help prove that after-school programs are tied to increased student achievement.

Connections for Youth: A 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

St. Louis (MO) Public Schools—Spring 2000
IEL Staff: Naomi Housman and Barbara Kaufmann

The School and Community Context

The city of St. Louis City has a declining population of 333,986. Fifty-three percent of the residents are African American and another two percent represent other minority groups. Social and economic disinvestments and deep racial divides following school desegregation have drained the city's vitality over the last few decades. In 1999, the 80 percent minority students in the St. Louis City Public Schools met state standards in only three of eleven performance categories.



A variety of regional, state, and city initiatives (St. Louis 2004, Vision for Children at Risk, Family Investment Trust, etc.) have formed in recent years to improve outcomes for young people. Their presence has fostered relationships among city stakeholders and brought new resources to the city. Numerous programs designed to enhance service delivery and education are in place at the school level (AmeriCorps, Caring Communities, Total Quality Schools, Accelerated School Program, etc.). In its application for the 21st CCLC grant, the district noted that the city and its region is relatively rich in resources for youth, but that few efforts reflected the levels of coordination and programmatic focus that are required in order to make a significant difference. Cooperation is growing, but there has not yet been enough coordination among the reform efforts to make a difference in outcomes.

In 1999, the city's school system was given two years to improve its standings in state performance categories. At risk of losing its accreditation, the district launched *"Destination: Accreditation,"* a campaign in which after-school programs and site-based management teams were key strategies. The plan created major governance changes by giving district administrators responsibility for one specific strategy and requiring plan leaders and school principals to report monthly directly to the Superintendent. The 40 lowest achieving schools were designated as "Schools of Opportunity" and assigned oversight teams to help them improve.

21st CCLC Strategic Plan

Propelled by the threat of state takeover, the school district embraced the 21st CCLC Program as an opportunity to bolster academic performance at the schools most in need. Central office personnel developed the strategic plan for implementation with input from school-based staff and clearly and passionately communicated the program's unique goals and expectations.

The primary focus of the St. Louis 21st CCLC Program—"Connections for Youth"—is increased academic achievement, and the goals are to provide adolescents and their families with skills and resources to improve academic performance and to make successful decisions regarding drug use and violence. The 21st CCLC program intends to create a seamless connection between the regular school day and its activities; thus, the program is described and advertised as an "extended day," rather than as an "after school" program.

21st CCLC Program(s)

21st CCLC programs were established at seven of the district's 109 schools: four elementary and three middle schools; five of the seven schools also are Community Education Center sites. The program reaches approximately 600 students daily. Each site offers three basic program components: 1) academic instruction; 2) homework assistance and tutoring; and 3) recreation and youth development. Daily meals and Saturday activities are also provided. There is a sibling program for children in grades K–3 and parenting activities to make it easier for older siblings to take part in the extended day. Each site is run and staffed by a full-time site coordinator and teachers from that school.

21st CCLC Governance

The district's well-established network of Community Education Centers (CECs)[3] provided the model for site level school and community-based governance structures. The school district is responsible for the general oversight, policy direction, and fiscal control of the 21st CCLC grant. The original plan called for the district's Office of Community Education to administer the initiative, but this responsibility was later given to the district's Summer, Evening and Night School/Parochial and Private School Collaboration Office.

The lead district administrator established a 21st CCLC Program Advisory Council (Advisory Council) with 54 members representing community service agencies from across the district and region, as well as the newer state, regional, and city initiatives focused on improving outcomes for children and youth. Twenty-one of the members

[3] CECs were established in the mid-70s, continued as a part of court-ordered desegregation plans, and scaled-up following the demise of court-ordered desegregation.

were designated as Community Partners, that is, as agencies willing to subcontract or to provide in-kind services to sites. Ten of these members came on board in the second year, and this was viewed as evidence of the 21st CCLC program's increased relevance and reach in the schools and community.[4]

Members of the Advisory Council include principals and site team coordinators from each of the seven 21st CCLC school sites and the chiefs of various agencies and their designees. The Advisory Council is not formally convened on a regular basis throughout the school year. As of Year 2, the district had held three meetings, usually held as an event marking the beginning or ending of the school year. Though time is designated for site teams and their community partners to discuss current issues and to revisit the program's vision, the meetings are used primarily to provide members with updated program information. The Community Planning Committee (CPC), a separate, yet related governance entity focused solely on after school programming, has been helpful to the Advisory Council, serving as a type of *ad hoc* advisory group to the Advisory Council on issues of sustainability. The Director of the 21st Century program has played a significant leadership role in the CPC, and many of the members of the Advisory Council also participate in the CPC.

Site management teams have recently been required in all schools. 21st CCLC sites could decide whether they wanted to use an existing site-based council or to create a new one. Some sites opted to let existing councils serve as the management team, while other sites elected to identify separate teams or subcommittees. Irrespective of the model used, the 21st CCLC site coordinator is part of the team and parents are involved. Some site teams include business participation.

21st CCLC Results and Sustainability

All seven 21st CCLC sites are fully operational. Year One evaluation reports documented that academic performance was improving among participants, retention was high, parents were participating, and community agencies and organizations had been very active. The district submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Education for eleven additional 21st CCLC sites.

The question remains as to whether and how the current sites will be sustained beyond Year Three. School and district staff, Advisory Council, and CPC members are confident that the program will continue, but no one yet knows how or can identify the source of the money. Their confidence derives from a strong belief that the program is working and has the support of the schools, parents, and the community. They also believe the program will continue because of something they call "good political timing"—the possibility of getting state funding because after school programs are written into the Superintendent's strategic plan. They also are hopeful that the school board might appropriate money for the programs.

[4] In Year Two, the 21st CCLC Coordinator estimated that the partners had already contributed over $500,000 in in-kind services.

As a sustainability strategy, the Director of the 21st CCLC included representatives from the state, regional, and city initiatives focused on children and youth on the Advisory Council. These representatives, prominent members of the Advisory Council and of the CPC, link the city to a network of larger city and county initiatives that are working toward the same goals for children. The Director understood that it was important to develop strong relationships with these new and broad-based constituencies and to involve them in this school district-based effort.

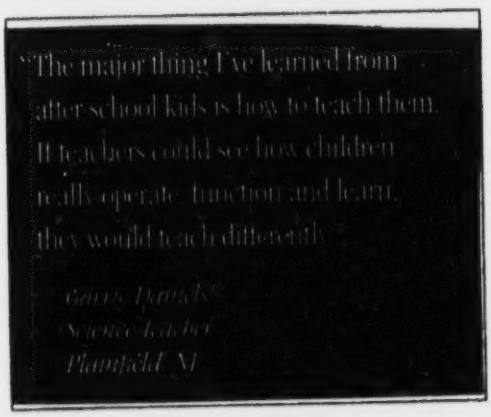
While nearly all staff and external partners expressed the belief that the program will be sustained because it serves key community needs, none were aware of concrete ways in which the necessary funds would be secured to maintain the program beyond the life of the federal grant. Site level staff, however, have participated in national training sessions on sustainability, and have been encouraged by district leaders to plan budgets that will support the program beyond year three. In general, sustainability planning has occurred mainly through the CPC. The discussions have focused not only on the 21st CCLC program, but on the bigger issue of matching needs with resources for extended day programs city-wide.

Plainfield Partnership for Learning

Plainfield (NJ) Public Schools—Spring 2000
IEL Staff: Martin J. Blank and Laura Samberg

The School and Community Context

Plainfield, New Jersey is a small city 28 miles outside of New York City. Its 46,000 population is nearly three-quarters minority with a public school minority enrollment of 99 percent. Economic distress is apparent in closing businesses, a shrinking tax base, and high rates of school failure, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS.


"The major thing I've learned from
after school kids is how to teach them.
If teachers could see how children
really operate, function and learn,
they would teach differently."
Garry Panek
Science Teacher
Plainfield, NJ

An elected nine-member Board of Education oversees 13 schools. The Superintendent led a successful effort to designate the District as a high needs, urban poverty area. In 1999 it was approved as an "Abbott District" and now receives approximately $14 million annually in additional state funding.

21st CCLC Strategic Plan

Plainfield's 21st CCLC application was spearheaded by the School Superintendent and the directors of two initiatives already operating at some schools, Communities in Schools (CIS) and the state-funded School-based Youth Services Program. 21st CCLC funds would be used to expand "Plainfield's Promise," a Board of Education initiative modeled after America's Promise and designed to provide comprehensive services and academic support to children and their families from kindergarten through high school. This new funding stream would bring CIS activities to two middle schools for the first time and expand activity at two existing elementary school sites.

21st CCLC Program(s)

The 21st CCLC grant currently serves approximately 265 students every day after school at two elementary and two middle schools; some evening and weekend workshops also are offered. Full-time site coordinators with input from existing school management teams have developed a wide variety of enrichment classes and homework help. Teachers and parents refer middle school students and consider the program an intensive intervention for students falling behind. All of the activities are designed to "coincide" with the whole curriculum. Snacks and hot meals are provided and parents and staff talk frequently at dismissal time. A job readiness seminar for parents offered in one school has been very popular and there are plans to offer it at another site.

21st CCLC Governance

The 21st CCLC initiative operates under the auspices of the School Board. The Plainfield Coalition serves as its Advisory Board. The Coalition was formed in 1996 by the Board of Education, the Health Center, and a local hospital as a mechanism to convene service providers and identify community needs and address gaps in service. Its 40 members serve as a resource to the initiative rather than as an entity with responsibility for making administrative, fiscal, or management decisions. The full Coalition meets on a monthly basis. Members share ideas about what a well-rounded program should look like and help focus attention on areas where community needs exist. It also provides a forum in which to keep the community informed about 21st CCLC activities and build support.

The School District originally intended to manage operations across all sites. In Year Two, site level management for three of the four 21st CCLCs was subcontracted to CIS. This was done in order to improve efficiency and to ensure greater flexibility in hiring, payroll, and procurement. The City Parks and Recreation Department, long involved in a fourth site, provides on-site management there.

Existing school management teams serve as site teams for 21st CCLC centers. These LINC (Leadership, Innovation and Change) Councils were recently instituted as a requirement of "Abbott District" funding, and their effectiveness is still developing. Members include the principal, teachers, support staff, parents, community members, and students. Their role is to bring together various perspectives and ensure that there is broad support for school improvement efforts. The 21st CCLC program is considered an academic enrichment initiative, and the 21st CCLC Coordinators serve on the Council, as necessary. This provides an opportunity for staff to keep school and parents informed and ask for input.

21st CCLC Results/Sustainability

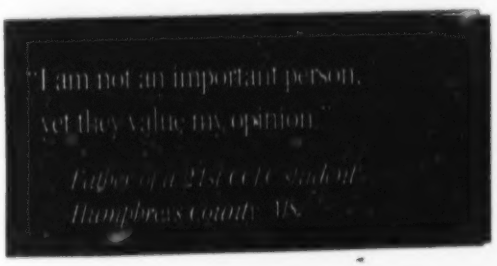
In Year Two, 21st CCLC staff have worked to show an explicit linkage between each after school activity and one or more of the District's core curriculum standards. Staff collect information on how many programs are provided and the numbers served; teachers provide monthly reports. The District and Coalition members intend to give increased attention to identifying outcomes, indicators, and related evaluation issues in the coming months.

Mid-Delta 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Humphreys County (MS) Public Schools—Spring 2000
IEL Staff: Elizabeth L. Hale and Sharon Walter

The School and Community Context

The Mid-Delta 21st CCLC is a partnership among four school districts in Mississippi: Greenville, Hollandale, Humphreys County, and Indianola. The Humphreys County School District, based in Belzoni, MS, serves as the lead agency and houses the program's central staff.



These four districts are located in one of the nation's most impoverished and underserved regions—the Mississippi Delta. Collectively, they serve 15,636 children, mainly African American. Humphreys County has developed a thriving catfish farming industry, and nearby Indianola is the home of blues legend B.B. King. But, the primary characteristics of the region include high rates of poverty, low levels of educational attainment, and high rates of unemployment.

In 1996, the enrollment in these four school districts accounted for nine percent of the students enrolled in Mississippi public schools and for 12 percent of drop-outs. Among the 50 states, Mississippi ranks first in percent of teen births and families headed by single parents; 11th in teens not attending school or working; and 15th in high school drop-outs.

The 21st CCLC Strategic Plan

The 21st CCLC provides a funding umbrella under which four districts have developed their own programs to meet a shared goal: working with community partners to meet the needs of and expand opportunities available to residents of their respective communities. The vision of the lead agency's superintendent is ***"to establish a full-service community school where the school and community work together with the school as the focal point."*** The model is intended to treat student and families holistically, providing access to the resources that build self-worth and the skills needed to live successfully.

21st CCLC Program(s)

Funding supports a 21st CCLC in each district. The main activities are academic enhancement (tutoring in math and English) and mentoring designed to increase self-esteem and prevent drug abuse and violence. During the regular school year, most

programs operate four days a week after school. The Greenville Center is open Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Each of the four school districts has a summer school program and occasional Saturday activities. In addition, all programs offer some activities for parents.

21st CCLC Governance

The Humphreys School District is fiscal agent for the 21st CCLC grant. Funds are divided equally among the four districts, and their respective school boards make policy and programming decisions specific to each district. A 19-member Consortium, including the four superintendents, meets quarterly with representatives from area businesses, agencies, churches, parents, and students. Though intended to plan for and make policy decisions, in practice the Consortium serves primarily as a forum for sharing information rather than making decisions. Slightly smaller boards in each of the four districts also play an advisory role. When policy and program issues arise that affect the entire initiative, they are dealt with and resolved by the four superintendents and their school boards—peer to peer, outside the Consortium.

At the site level, coordinators hired from the community, rather than school staff, make most day-to-day decisions. Principals, however, have control over the use of school facilities. Superintendents make the final call when there are problems.

21st CCLC Results/Sustainability

Staff report that several non-academic activities including mentoring, substance abuse and violence prevention; and teen parenting classes have caused changes in behavior and attitudes about school and learning for a number of students. Teachers report that participants are engaged and excited about learning. Plans are underway for a more formal evaluation to chart progress.

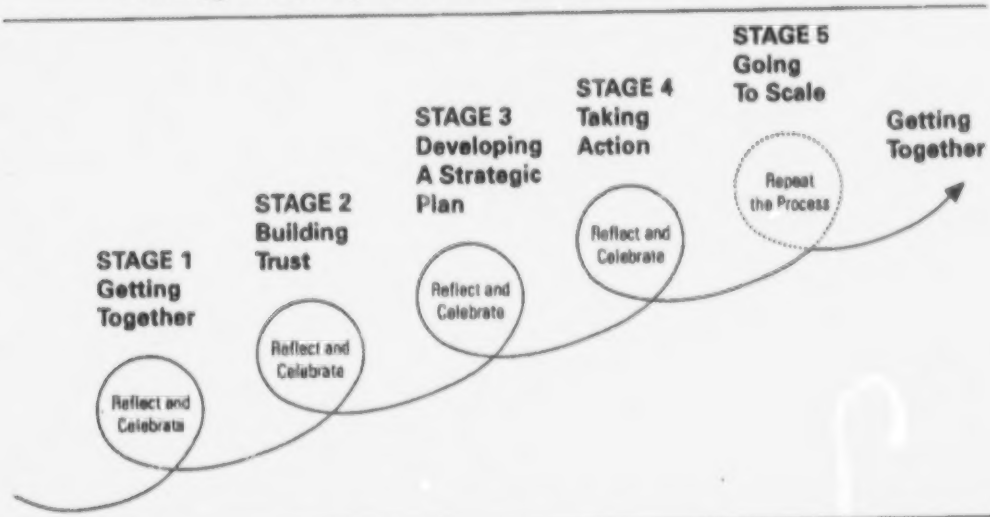
PART TWO

Building School-Community Capacity To Work Together

The four sites visited have made progress toward more effective programming and toward meeting long-range goals. The growth and development of collaboration capacity is illustrated through the lens of a five-stage model of collaboration between community agencies, organizations, and institutions—"Together We Can."

The spiraling design of the "Together We Can" framework (see Figure 1) depicts the iterative nature of collaboration. Partners must repeat each stage, each time expanding the size and scope of the initiative. Through this spiraling process, partners gain greater commitment to long-term, shared goals, learn how to avoid barriers, and move toward collaborative change more rapidly.

Figure 1. TOGETHER WE CAN
Building a New System: A Five Stage Process for Change



By the end of Year One, the four 21st CCLC sites had moved through the first four stages of the collaborative model. They had identified partners, worked to build trust, developed a strategic plan, and taken action to begin implementing plans. In Year

Two, the sites were poised to enter Stage Five where the challenge is to restructure permanently how resources are used across school and community systems. In the language of reformers, the challenge is to "go to scale."

The Key Tasks in Stage Five: Going to Scale

Task #1: Continuously adapt and expand the quality and scope of 21st Century programming.

Task #2: Engage new partners, build a constituency and develop leadership.

Task #3: Develop the capacity of collaborative decision-making based on:

- Clear roles and shared expectations
- Willingness among partner institutions to adjust their own policies when necessary to solve problems
- Shared allocation of resources to meet agreed upon results.

The following discussion focuses on the key tasks in Stage Five—**Going to Scale**. Each task is numbered and then followed by a discussion that is divided into two parts: **Progress**, which analyzes the progress that the 21st CCLC sites have made, and **Challenges**, which identifies the issues challenging the four programs as they move forward.

TASK #1: Continuously Adapt and Expand the Quality and Scope of 21st CCLC Programming

PROGRESS—TASK #1

As 21st CCLC grantee communities enter Stage Five they must fine-tune their programmatic efforts while keeping a focus on long-range goals. They need to remember that the power of the 21st CCLC initiative lies in its ability to help build and fund a comprehensive system of extended support and learning. Efforts must reach deeply into the community, not just support a specific program. Activities and programs need to integrate the elements of youth development, quality education, family support, and community engagement. Creating these connections requires close communication among providers and the ability to identify and resolve implementation problems.

A major challenge for most grantee governing bodies, according to IEL's Year One report, has been the tendency to focus more on making day-to-day management decisions than on making decisions to help set and achieve a long-term agenda. In Year Two, observations across four sites and grantee reports suggest that improved staffing and efforts to improve communication among participants occurred. As a result, staff and management teams are more effectively addressing management

issues. Closer connections between academic objectives and 21st CCLC activities have been forged. Efforts continue to balance academic needs with young people's desires for engaging, high interest, and high energy activities, and to engage adults by offering more employability, literacy, and parenting training. More cooperative arrangements will be needed to expand this kind of programming, especially with business, higher education, and human resource agencies.

The View from the Ground Floor

In all four communities, grantees provide structured after-school activities from one to five days per week. Most programming occurs before 6:00 p.m. with some sites offering limited evening and weekend activities for adults and family members. Many sites operate a full- or half-day program for some period during the summer months. Activities in every site emphasize, but in most cases are not limited to, academics and homework.

Certified teachers are widely used to staff the program. Non-teaching school employees, including guidance counselors and security personnel, and staff from other agencies are used in varying degrees. Volunteers from business, community organizations, and families also help provide support, enrichment, and physical activities including mentoring, substance abuse counseling, recreation, and youth development activities.

While maintaining a strong focus on student needs, many participants want to expand the ways in which parents are involved, not just in support of their children's learning but to build their own skills and abilities. At sites where ESL, literacy, computer, and employability programs have been offered at times suitable for working families, adults have expressed strong interest. Some sites within grantee communities are polling parents to find out more about what adults in the community want and need. Other sites are scheduling evening programming and providing meals or at least an opportunity to eat a meal brought from home before activities begin. In addition, they are trying to connect with agencies that can provide more adult employability and skills training.

Management and supervision occurs at both the district and site levels. The school district administrative office responsible for the grant typically provides project level supervision. At the site level, coordinators are hired from the community to perform this role, as in Plainfield. In Denver, the principal might tap teachers or other school personnel to coordinate 21st Century activities—in addition to their regular assignments.

Most, but not all, of the individual centers have developed either a site-level advisory team or appointed a representative, usually the site coordinator, to serve as a member of an existing school-based management team. Site coordinators make most programming decisions with varying degrees of supervision from individual principals and input from the site team. In the Humphreys County 21st CCLC initiative, a partnership among four school districts, school boards are highly involved in programming issues, for example, making decisions about field trip destinations, their duration, and other event scheduling.

Designing and Developing Programs, Together

Building On What's Available

There is evidence of developing collaboration in many aspects of program design, implementation, and adaptation. All four communities have built their initiatives by integrating and expanding established program approaches and building on available infrastructures. Plainfield's program, for example, grew out of collaboration among the School Superintendent, the Director of Community Schools of New Jersey, Inc. and the Director of School-Based Youth Services, a state funded initiative aimed at high school-age students. 21st CCLC funding provided a way to offer both services and educational enhancement to middle school sites. When it became clear that the Communities in Schools (CIS) infrastructure offered greater flexibility in hiring and procurement, the school district gave CIS management responsibility for three sites. The District maintained a successful management relationship with the city's Department of Parks and Recreation at a fourth location.

Talking Straight and Solving Problems

Partners have developed their ability to communicate across levels and partner organizations to improve programming and to solve problems. Formal and informal contact among site coordinators, principals, district-level staff, and advisory groups occurs both within and across sites. In Plainfield, feedback has prompted the development of a uniform procedures manual so that 21st CCLC sites understand and follow essential school policies and introduce consistency in collecting information about students.

Frequent informal communication among site coordinators in Denver has made it easy for sites to draw on one another for assistance, even sharing teachers when the need arises. Informing neighborhood residents about scheduled evening program activities served to reduce conflict among those inconvenienced by parking issues. At one school site, an active advisory team chairperson is credited with keeping lines of communication open and cooperation possible among partner agencies that compete for resources from the same funding source.

Connecting In- and After-School Learning

Closer connections between a school's academic objectives and 21st CCLC learning experiences have been forged. In all four communities, principals and teachers recruit and refer students. According to Grant Performance reports, school personnel at most sites share information about the school curricula and instructional practices with 21st CCLC staff. However, grantees typically point to having certified teachers to staff the academic component of 21st CCLC programs as the most important way to link in-school and after-school agendas.

Additional efforts to ensure that after-school initiatives are responsive to school needs are also evident. In most sites, activities are expected to relate in some way to state academic standards. At one Denver site, after students finish their homework in after-school homework clubs, tutors make sure it is delivered to teachers on the same afternoon and is not lost on the way to and from school.

In St. Louis, professional staff development activities connect after-school programming with district instructional priorities. Each 21st Century site must submit to the district an action plan outlining a program that is (1) designed to meet the school's unique needs and (2) aligned with district goals. The St. Louis program maintains the greatest possible continuity between the school and the extended day program by relying mainly upon school staff to develop and run the 21st CCLC initiative. Teachers who wish to participate in the program are required to submit lesson plans that build on the academic activities occurring during the regular school day.

CHALLENGES—TASK #1

Finding and Retaining the Best People

Finding and retaining qualified staff is a widespread problem. In Plainfield, for example, staff turnover disrupted programming well into Year Two. Certified teachers are in short supply at many grantee sites, forcing sites to recruit teachers from other schools or to use part-time or substitute teachers. This solution dilutes the desired personal connection between regular day and after-school activities, but is often necessary. Burnout is not uncommon among teachers who tack on additional hours of preparation and work with students and families at the end of an already long school day. In addition, not every teacher is comfortable with the more active, experience-based teaching style that often occurs outside the traditional classroom. Teachers must be able to tolerate relatively high noise and activity levels while maintaining adequate control.

Staffing problems also have resulted from insufficient partnerships especially with business, higher education, and human resources agencies. At one site, mentoring activities were not offered because not enough mentors from a nearby high school could be recruited. Another community was unable to meet the high demand for an employability training course because staff could identify only one person able to teach it.

Aligning Academic Achievement and Youth Development Goals

Maintaining a balance between academic and youth development activities poses another continuing challenge across communities. There is general agreement among 21st CCLC staff and most principals that students benefit more from activities that build skills and promote interest rather than from those that simply ensure that students complete assignments or do well on a specific test. Nonetheless, teachers have requested and implemented very focused test preparation activities in at least some sites. The pressure is

understandable. In St. Louis, for example, the state has given the district two years to significantly improve student academic performance or lose accreditation.

Unless carefully managed, such pressure can skew the careful balance between the academics that young people need and the enrichment and recreation activities that attract and retain their interest. St. Louis sites are responding by increasing active learning and high-interest activities on Fridays as a way to increase student interest and attendance. Denver's design, based on several years of experience with an AmeriCorps initiative, has led to a three-pronged approach—part academic, part recreational, and part youth development. Even so, as that city's Grant Performance report notes, there is a continuing struggle to balance "the classes students will take and the classes they need (i.e. homework assistance)." Ideally, programming designed to improve academic performance will increasingly incorporate the youth development and hands-on, proactive learning approach that young people most enjoy and learn from best.

TASK #2: Engage New Partners, Build a Constituency and Develop Leadership

PROGRESS—TASK #2

As initiatives move toward permanence and expansion, more partners are required to provide resources and leadership at both the community and site levels. Initiatives must build broad-based constituencies to generate enough public will to fuel and support expanded efforts. They must promote participation among young people and families whose needs are being met; among school staff who see students learning more effectively; among service providers who have new opportunities to reach target groups; and among residents who feel safer because children and adults have a place to go and more things to do. The involvement of each of these elements is important if initiatives hope to develop approaches that young people and their families really want and need.

At the end of Year One, membership on 21st CCLC governing bodies was skewed toward institutions, especially the schools. Practitioners, clients, neighborhood residents, and young people had minimal input in governance deliberations. As the following discussion suggests, grantees are working to engage new members. There has been some successful effort to provide leadership training and a growing interest in developing programming focused on employment and literacy skills. While constituent support among parents and other core groups is growing, efforts to identify and nurture leadership among parents and to strengthen their involvement in decision-making has received relatively little attention. In every community, the growth and development of inclusive, broad-based partnerships among these sectors has been affected by racial, ethnic, and regional factors.

Making Decisions at the Top

At the community level, grantee efforts to engage key stakeholders, broaden community support, and develop leadership have focused mainly on creating or designating formal, cross-sector 21st CCLC advisory groups whose role is to provide advice and make recommendations rather than to exercise final decision-making authority on 21st CCLC matters.

In Humphreys County, a 19-member advisory group was created including each of the four district superintendents and site coordinators, as well as business, agency, church, and student participants. St. Louis developed a 54-person board representing more than 20 agencies that have agreed to contract with individual 21st Century sites to provide services. However, it has met infrequently—once a quarter or less. Scheduling conflicts have made it difficult for school staff to attend, even though they are invited.

In Plainfield, an existing cross-sector body was designated as the 21st CCLC advisory group. Initiated in 1996 and recently incorporated, the Plainfield Coalition is a joint effort of the school district, health department, and local hospital. With funding from the state Health Department's Division of Family Services, the Coalition represents approximately 40 organizations focused on coordinating grant-making activity and identifying gaps in services among child and family providers. Site coordinators routinely attend the Coalition's monthly meetings and keep members apprised of their activities. Denver has no formal city-wide group responsible for overseeing 21st CCLC activities.

In addition to community level groups, grantees also have developed cross-sector teams at most school sites. These formal structures provide another way to involve and build relationships with a variety of school, family, and community organizations. Some are newly created groups; at other sites, existing school-based management teams provide guidance for the 21st CCLCs. Most include a cross-section of school and 21st CCLC staff. The majority involve providers, parents, and residents in varying degrees. These bodies are referred to, and correctly so, as Advisory Groups. In at least some sites, however, their recommendations carry significant weight, and staff frequently seek their input.

Reaching Out

The grantees' program sites also have developed relationships with local businesses, churches, neighborhood organizations, and provider agencies that might or might not be represented on a formal advisory team. According to Year Two Grant Performance reports, these community partners assist sites in a variety of ways. They are most likely to help by providing services, volunteers, or advice about program elements. They are least involved in raising money or in providing paid staff—although their non-cash or in-kind contribution can easily exceed cash resources. St. Louis, for example, estimates the dollar amount of partner services provided at $500,000.

Expanding and cultivating partnerships is time consuming, so relationships already established by school or support staff connected to other school based initiatives are especially valuable. In Denver, there is a long-standing relationship with a local Boys and Girls Club

(B&GC). Experienced B&GC staff provide youth development activities to children in the afternoon following academic enrichment activities conducted by school staff. In Plainfield, partnerships with the City's Police Department have brought officers involved in DARE, a drug prevention program, on site. In a positive, non-threatening manner police men and women have helped teach courses, chaperone field trips and, in some cases, funded expanded recreational and sports activities. They also have helped to create a safe and comfortable learning environment for teachers and students.

Building a Bigger and Broader Base

Constituency building has not been a stated priority of most grantees, but all four communities report growing support for their work among school staff and parents. Some sites plan to actively build community awareness in Year Three. Stakeholders across the four communities are hopeful that this support will translate into funding for 21st CCLC efforts beyond their current funding.

In St. Louis, staff have worked to communicate clearly the unique goals and expectations of the 21st CCLC as a way of building shared commitment. They have frequently encouraged providers to avoid turf issues by reminding them "these are all our children." According to a key advisory committee member and United Way representative in Denver, the community has become engaged in 21st CCLC because of the meaningful services it has provided over the last two years.

Plainfield's school-based management teams, which serve as site teams, have helped school staff understand the contribution of 21st CCLCs to student learning. Family-friendly programming, including a hot evening meal for children and frequent informal conversations with parents when they pick up their children, has contributed to community support. Said a mother of three: "It's great to know my son has already had dinner when I pick him up. That means I can have a few extra moments after work with the twins. When we get home we make sure the homework he began after school is ready for the next day." In Humphreys County, support has grown as parents have seen their children benefit from new experiences. Students have visited museums, attended the ballet, and participated in a variety of fine arts and dance activities. As one parent put it, "They take children places they might never go."

Developing and Nurturing Leaders

Leadership among parents and grass-roots community organizations can have a potent and positive effective on school and community. Observations across grantee communities suggest that in some sites, training opportunities, staff selection, and informal decision-making procedures are working to expand community ownership.

Leadership training, while not widely offered, appears especially effective. In St. Louis, for example, after a parent site council member dedicated to increasing parent

involvement was sent to a national leadership training conference, she found funding for and implemented a six-step program for parent participation.

Selecting staff that reflects the community also matters. In three of the four grantee communities, site coordinators are not typically school staff. Instead they are selected, in part, for their roots in the community and familiarity with providers and institutions beyond the schools. Most have quickly learned to navigate school bureaucracies, and their standing in the community makes them a frequent conduit for community concerns.

A minimum of red tape also seems to encourage participation among community organizations. According to Advisory Committee members at Denver's Horace Mann School, "Institutions have stayed out of the way... things have happened on handshakes and good faith. The informality is helpful."

CHALLENGES—TASK #2

Getting Help from Friends

While constituent support among parents and other core groups is growing, efforts to identify and nurture leadership among parents and to strengthen their involvement in decision-making received relatively little attention in Year Two. Nor is there significant outreach to involve and support the community organizations that represent them. Training and staff development has occurred to some extent in all four communities, but it is generally designed to address management issues raised by site coordinators and concentrates primarily on building academic linkages between regular and 21st CCLC staff and programming. Few opportunities exist for leadership development among community adults.

There is a growing recognition across the four grantees that more programming needs to be provided for adults aimed at building employment and literacy skills. At present, most adult activities are designed to help family members better understand and participate in their children's learning. In St. Louis, for example, although some parents are paid to serve as after-school assistants, content focuses on teaching parents about the challenges of adolescence and about where to find community services.

These approaches are important, but they do not focus sufficiently upon developing the skills and information adults need to fully participate in their schools or communities. Parents in Humphreys County say they are honored by the extent to which parents are involved on advisory committees. As one puts it, "I am not an important person, yet they value my opinion." But parents also report that they are not as interested in titles as in being heard. They want to become more confident in dealing with teachers—and other school and community leaders. Parents serve on the 21st CCLC advisory groups along with superintendents and other school staff, but they come as individuals—without the power of organizational affiliation and support.

Getting Past the Past

The growth and development of partnerships in all four communities have been affected by racial, ethnic, and regional considerations. In Humphreys County racial issues abound—in subtle and not so subtle ways. Participants report that many white teachers and principals do not send their children to public schools; nor do members of the business community. Some school staff develop an "us-them" approach to family and community concerns, and there are few immediate incentives for business leaders to get involved.

In St. Louis, physical boundaries affect local decision-making. The city of St. Louis and the more affluent county that surrounds it are separate legal jurisdictions. Regional decision-making would direct some county resources toward solving urban problems. This approach is favored by many family and youth advocates. But there is strong opposition to sharing resources across boundaries from many quarters in the county—even though urban problems are beginning to cross jurisdictional lines.

In Plainfield, there is very little communication between the African American and Hispanic communities. There are few organized Latino advocacy groups, and those that exist are not well connected to school efforts.

TASK #3: Develop the Capacity of Collaborative Decision-Making

PROGRESS—TASK #3

Collaborative governance is based on shared power among partners with equal authority and accountability. It relies on clear roles and shared expectations; willingness among partner institutions to adjust their own policies to solve problems; and shared allocation of resources to meet agreed upon results. Building the trust, understanding, mutual goals, and capacity necessary for partners to work together at this level of cooperation develops slowly and requires steady attention.

In its Year One report, IEL found that partners tended to own specific "pieces" of the program offered in 21st CCLCs, instead of sharing accountability for agreed upon results that depended on an integrated strategy of programs and relationships. Roles and expectations among partners at the community and site level were not clear. And communication with other decision-making groups, especially governing bodies of partner agencies, was insufficient.

Because single agencies, namely school districts, receive and are held accountable for 21st Century CCLC funds, it is not surprising that they have retained primary governance authority. The many cooperative arrangements that characterize 21st CCLC initiatives are essential to manage and implement a comprehensive program, but they are

not designed to support system-wide implementation. While partners may have goals similar to 21st CCLC, strictly cooperative relationships do not require participants to develop mutual goals or incorporate a 21st CCLC agenda into the work of their home agencies. Our findings at the end of Year Two suggest that collaboration develops best in communities where cross-sector stakeholders have a history of working together and where strong intermediary groups like local foundations and United Ways foster connections and provide technical assistance.

Even so, sharing and using relevant information among community sectors in order to design strategies, implement programs, and evaluate results remains difficult. Oversight bodies at the community and school level are so focused on school-wide academic achievement—clearly a long-term result—that they have not helped partners and constituents appreciate the n ear-term impact of 21st CCLC activities on interim indicators like improved attendance, behavior, and parent involvement. In doing so, they overlook an important opportunity to prove the initiative's effectiveness, build support, and buy the time needed to achieve more long-term, academic achievement gains.

Working Together

The extent of collaborative culture and the presence of intermediaries to foster its growth and development vary widely across the four communities. In St. Louis and Denver, there is a significant history of collaboration. In Plainfield and Humphreys County there is far less.

In St. Louis, for example, participants in several substantial state, regional, and local initiatives focused on child and family issues also sit on the 21st Century Advisory Council. These initiatives include Missouri's Family and Community Trust (FACT), a state-level, public-private partnership charged with developing new relationships among the state and its communities. Since 1993, through its Caring Communities strategy, the FACT has funded dozens of local partnerships and school-linked services and fostered a climate focused on results. St. Louis 2004 and Vision for Children at Risk are two regional planning efforts focused on public awareness and institutional efforts aimed at youth development and safe neighborhoods not only in the city of St. Louis but also in the surrounding metropolitan area.

Operating as a local intermediary, the Danforth Foundation has helped launch and support these efforts. As a member of the 21st CCLC Advisory Council, the Foundation also has played a major role in planning an effective evaluation. It is anxious to capitalize on the 21st CCLC opportunity to show a positive relationship between an investment in after-school youth development, academic achievement, and district standards. These efforts have resulted in an informal Community Planning Committee focused on after-school programs among a number of stakeholders who participate in one or more of these reform efforts. Most also sit on the 21st CCLC Advisory Council. Meeting several times each month, members of the group are working to sustain and connect the City's after-school programs, including the 21st CCLC. Focusing on developing

capacity, they have organized two separate training events to help providers, parents, and others involved in after-school efforts improve management, expand resources, develop relationships, and market their success.

In Denver, key stakeholders from the school district's Department of Community Education, the United Way, and the Rose Community and Piton Foundations, among others, have worked together for several years to plan, implement and support school-linked family resource and community education. While Denver's 21st CCLC has no formal governing body, close communication among this core group has kept members knowledgeable about what is occurring at the site level. The group includes a former Piton program officer who now chairs the city school board. It has begun to see the need for an umbrella body, separate from the school system, which could work to coordinate, oversee, fiscally manage, and connect community school efforts like 21st CCLCs.

In Plainfield, and especially in Humphreys County, collaboration is not as complex as it is in the larger cities of St. Louis or Denver. The Plainfield Coalition, however, developed several years ago to coordinate grant-making efforts among youth and family service providers and to identify gaps in services, has greatly expanded trust and communication among the school district, the health department, and a variety of public and private service providers. It has laid the groundwork for another layer of activities that could focus on defining the desired results and working toward and measuring progress made to achieving them.

The Humphreys County School District and the other districts in its 21st CCLC consortium have had minimal collaborative experience. However, linkage with a local hospital has been significant, including hospital operation of a school-based health clinic and joint efforts to insure that more eligible students participate in the state's CHIP (Children Health Insurance Program) initiative.

Building Capacity for Collaboration

It is clear that 21st CCLC initiatives are the beneficiaries in those communities where cross-sector stakeholders know each other, communicate regularly, and have worked together on community-wide planning and agenda setting efforts. The presence of strong intermediary groups—neutral "third parties"—also has helped. As they have in some of these communities, foundations and local United Ways can broaden common ground, provide technical assistance, and help "do" the work of collaboration. In some communities, ongoing community-level partnerships, with a history of reaching out to support the schools, have "primed the pump" for 21st century efforts. According to a key player in St. Louis, "The log jam broke with 21st CCLC. There is an expectation that people will work together. I know that the school district or other community partners will sit down with me if I have a problem, or vice versa."

CHALLENGES—TASK #3

Charting Progress

The development of collaborative decision-making at both the site and community level depends in part on access to accurate and appropriate information. 21st CCLC communities are still learning what data-based information they need, how to collect it, and how to use it to inform decision-making.

During Plainfield's first program year, for example, site coordinators developed their own procedures for tracking program activity. When coordinators at two of four sites resigned, no record of what had gone on at either site could be found. The loss of this information stalled program development and made for a bumpy transition when new coordinators were finally hired. In response, standardized forms, including program attendance logs and monthly student reports, were developed in Year Two. These records document what is happening at each site and permit some degree of cross-site comparison. They do not appear, however, to have been designed to capture the specific details needed to evaluate progress toward 21st CCLC objectives or to assist staff and partners in identifying areas that need attention.

Sharing and using information is particularly difficult at the community level. In general, partner organizations do not routinely share organizational data or use it to select or show progress toward shared goals. In St. Louis, a 21st CCLC partner and key participant, AmeriCorps, commissioned an evaluation of its own work. Findings were freely shared with 21st CCLC staff but it was not presented to the 21st CCLC Advisory Board for comment and review. In Plainfield, Coalition partners are clearly committed to improving the well-being of young people and their families. But, they have not acted on school district suggestions to select measurable indicators of progress that would reflect cross-sector accountability, such as the number of new children enrolled in state subsidized health insurance programs or progress related to teen pregnancy.

Keeping Expectations Real

Perhaps the most critical challenge facing 21st CCLC communities is academic achievement. School districts, under enormous pressure to improve state test scores, have recognized the potential of extended day efforts and written them into their strategic plans for school improvement. Some partners believe that school district investment in what 21st CCLC can provide is so high that they will pick up funding for at least core activities after the federal grants end.

Communities should be cautious about what they promise to deliver. (See the "Cautionary Tale" on page 28.) Improved school achievement requires close connections between a high quality, in-school program and complementary extended-day activities. School climate and parent-teacher relationships need to be positive. Instruction and curriculum must be

well developed and effective. Extended-day efforts alone, which reach only some children, will not be enough to improve school-wide achievement scores in the near term.

Extended day activities can, however, accelerate the efforts of schools working to improve their quality. Governing bodies need to pay more attention to interim indicators that can measure this contribution—like improved attendance, behavior, and parent involvement. They also need to help supporters understand the link between these indicators and school success. More fully engaging parents and students in their schools, communities, and in the "fun" of learning improves school climate and parent-staff relationships. After-school initiatives help to create the conditions necessary for high quality learning and achievement gains.

It is also essential that 21st CCLC communities be clear about what specific indicators they will use and what gains they expect to make among which parts of the school and community population during what period of time. Clear connections need to be spelled out in advance between activities and intended, reasonable results. Doing so will provide an important opportunity to prove the effectiveness of the 21st CCLC, build support, and buy the time needed to show lasting gains in student achievement.

Making Promises You Can Keep: A Cautionary Tale of One City

Denver's experience with Family Resource schools illustrates how easy it is for successful initiatives to fall prey to inflated expectations. Everyone wants a silver bullet. Unless an initiative says in advance what it can reasonably expect to accomplish, and measures that progress in some way, it will be easy for critics and funders with limited budgets to assume they have accomplished little or nothing. In 1989, a partnership among the city, the school district, human service organizations, businesses, and foundations created Family Resource Centers (FRC) at 14 Denver schools. Their purpose was to coordinate services and supports to assist families, address student's educational needs, and, as a result, increase student achievement. The approach was commended by the state as an exemplary model of a comprehensive and coordinated effort. The school district voted to increase the number of FRCs to 30 by the year 2000. Although most funding came from grants, when the school district allocation came up for review, school board members asked for impact results.

An in-house evaluation was requested but could show no difference in academic achievement between
students attending FRC schools and those with similar demographics who did not. In response, the school board withdrew its funding and services as fiscal agent. Centers may still operate but they must raise their own funds and overcome a debilitating vote of no confidence. Learning from this experience, FRC advocates, including the current School Board Chair, advise similar efforts in the future to establish:

- A realistic mission, adequate staff, and funding at an appropriate level to meet anticipated goals
- Clear and consistent program expectations and lines of accountability
- FRC principles as part of the whole school culture and curriculum
- An outside organization to oversee the initiative so that schools are relieved of management burdens and fiscal responsibility for tracking multiple funding sources.[5]

[5] Elaine Gantz Berman, "On the Pitfalls of Family Resource Schools" in *America's Family Support Magazine*, Fall 1999, p. 9–10.

PART THREE

Moving Forward

It is true that there is considerable cooperation evident among 21st CCLC partners, but collaborative governance is still on the horizon. This is not surprising given the relatively short time in which communities have had to launch a comprehensive set of extended learning activities and the fact that school districts alone are held fiscally accountable for 21st CCLC funds.

21st CCLCs, overseen by school districts, are introducing and coordinating community resources in the schools. Partnerships have expanded, but their authority and accountability for achieving broad 21st CCLC goals have not. In many cases, community involvement has been broad and substantial but partners have not been required to make substantial changes in how they use their resources in order to meet 21st CCLC objectives. Grantees have outlined broad results they would like to achieve, but stakeholders have not considered the ways in which personal attitudes and institutional policies and practices would have to change to make such results really possible.

As a consequence, the initiatives in these four communities remain primarily focused on 21st CCLC's immediate objective—creating school-based, extended-day programs to promote learning. In no case are grantees clearly envisioning or anywhere close to establishing comprehensive systems of community-school partnerships that are academically excellent, financially sustainable, and that support communication and learning throughout the community.

The relatively early stage of collaborative development in these four communities underscores how time-intensive efforts to change the way communities "do business" can be. Said one central figure in St. Louis' ongoing efforts, "Initiatives are aware of one another and sharing information but the city is still in the early stages as far as moving from competition to cooperation." Collaboration is even more challenging. What we observed in these four communities suggests that each one is engaging in key Stage Five roles but needs considerably more time and support to mature. Progress toward collaborative governance is occurring, though not with equal speed in each community.

Findings

- Grantee efforts have been highly project-oriented. Meeting grant requirements at the site level has left first-round grantees with very little time or incentive to develop more comprehensive, long-range, community-school strategies.

- Regardless of the composition of 21st CCLC partnerships, when disputes arise, authority and accountability reside with the school district, as grantee and lead agency. Cross-sector groups are advisory and do not make binding policy/programming decisions.

- Partners at both the community and site level primarily provide services and support and give advice. Site-team recommendations made by partners are often influential, but most teams do not have the staff support or community leadership capacity necessary to develop integrated change strategies or sustain successful approaches.

- At the community level, formal, cross-sector oversight bodies created expressly for the 21st CCLC grant have functioned weakly. There is some evidence that communities that have a strong collaborative culture, engage in *ad hoc* efforts among acknowledged stakeholders, and involve established coalitions are more likely to move toward collaborative governance and to capitalize on the long-term potential of the 21st CCLC initiative.

- Grantees are wisely tying 21st CCLC activities to direct improvement in school achievement but are not emphasizing their impact on interim indicators like improved attendance, behavior, and parent involvement that are necessary to create the conditions that lead to increased school achievement.

- Developing parent leadership and community capacity is not a first order priority despite evidence that organized parent leadership can have a potent and positive effect on school leadership, climate, and effectiveness.

- Complex political, socio-economic, and institutional factors, including racial, regional, and ethnic divisions—the silent issues—have affected the development of 21st CCLC in all four communities and must be addressed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed at funders, policymakers, providers of technical assistance, and community participants. While primarily based on the experience of four grantee communities, we believe they speak generally to issues experienced widely in 21st CCLCs. They are aimed at strengthening both first round grantees and new communities seeking to build and expand collaborative decision-making.

- **Extend the Grant Period:** The U.S. Department of Education should continue to request five-year grant authority from Congress to fund subsequent 21st CCLC grant competitions and give priority to grantees which demonstrate their capacity to

improve and institutionalize programming; expand partnerships, support, and leadership; and move toward cross-sector ownership of community school strategies. Current 21st CCLC application guidelines observe that effective collaboration takes several years to develop, although the Department currently has a three-year limit on its granting authority. "Pulling the plug" on initiatives making good progress discourages communities and can waste prior investment. Extended funding would give communities enough time to tackle complex, long-range objectives.

- **Provide School Site and Community-Focused Technical Assistance:** Build technical assistance for site teams into the 21st CCLC grant and expand ongoing efforts by TA providers and local intermediaries. At the site level, no technical assistance is currently available unless grantees use program funds to purchase it. Additional support is needed at the community level to help stakeholders understand the distinction between school-based programming and system-wide change and to agree on the degree of long-term change they want to create, such as new services for a target group, academic improvement in partner schools, or movement toward creation of a more comprehensive educational model.

- **Create Interim Indicators of Academic Success:** Work with communities to establish interim indicators of academic success like attendance, behavior, and parent involvement, but help them stay focused on long-range improvement in school-wide academic achievement. Communities need to develop reasonable expectations by which to define success, including measures owned by community partners, and then create program strategies to meet them.

- **Develop Leaders:** Improve local capacity and community support by increasing leadership and skills training for parents and grass roots leaders and by increasing their participation on site teams and community-level oversight groups. Increase site-level TA to promote outreach to groups that represent parents and increase their participation in decision-making groups. Expand programming aimed at building skills adults need as workers and community leaders as well as parents. Recognize the political nature of community participation and the underlying fissures that can divide shared efforts.

- **Collect and Share Data:** Encourage and help grantees to collect data and communicate information strategically. Help managers devise simple reporting methods to collect only those data that are necessary to track student and family participation and show progress toward indicators. Encourage sites to review data at frequent intervals and distribute appropriate information to key stakeholders, managers, parents, and community. Help them to consider political realities in selecting data and in devising presentations tailored to the needs, interests, and agendas of particular audiences.

- **Use the 21st CCLC as a Catalyst:** Develop grant materials and TA that emphasize the 21st CCLC initiative as a funding stream with the capacity to create comprehen-

sive systems of academically excellent and financially sustainable community schools. Provide examples of core principles from existing community school frameworks that integrate youth development, family support, quality education, and community engagement to guide local implementation. Such a structure can keep stakeholders focused on long-range strategies—at whatever level of change they wish to create.

PART FOUR

Making Real Change—Moving from After-School Programs to Community Schools

The explicit objective of the 21st CCLC, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, was to create community learning centers—stimulating, safe and cost effective after-school, weekend or summer havens for children, youth, and their families. However, the full potential of 21st CCLCs lies beyond its critical investment in after-school programs and beyond the legislation's emphasis on broad, cross-sector efforts to strengthen children, families, and communities.

Although not available when the first round of 21st CCLC grantees launched their initiatives, the most current application guidelines and technical assistance available to sites from the National Center for Community Education encourage grantees to fully integrate community partnerships and resources into the ongoing practice and policies of the whole school.[6] The expectation is that partnership activities grounded in creative, respectful, and collaborative relationships and new methods of decision-making can transform after-school programs into community schools. A community school describes what this kind of transformation can look like.

In the 1930s, philanthropist Charles Stewart Mott and educator Frank Manley began developing the idea of "a lighted schoolhouse." They envisioned a centrally located, seldom closed community center where young people and adults, educators and community partners could work, learn, recreate, and contribute to the vitality of their neighborhoods. Over the decades, thousands of community education centers have been established. Community education efforts have been embraced and enriched by family support advocates, youth workers, and community organizers, as well as educators.

The primary strategy of community schools is to develop partnerships and leverage community resources, both cash and in-kind. They are used to knit together a range of activities and opportunities for young people and adults in the community that support learning and achievement of all kinds. A range of models and approaches can fit into a basic community school framework—as long as they reflect a core set of operating principles: high expectations for learning and teaching, strong partnerships and

[6] National Center for Community Education, Flint, Michigan. www.nccenet.org/funding/funding.htm. See the U.S. Department of Education's home page link to "21st Century Community Learning Centers" and the "Links" button on that page for additional resource information.

collaboration, a respect for diversity and community strengths, and a commitment to results. Partners are encouraged to use these principles to reevaluate how they use their resources; select, train and deploy staff; and fund, assess, and sustain their efforts. Careful planning and oversight ensures that community schools connect quality education, youth and community development, family support, and active family engagement into a comprehensive and coherent design. Participation among families, students, schools, and community partners ensures that activities meet local needs and show results.

Building on the after-school program funded through the 21st CCLC is a challenging undertaking. In most communities, the shift from after-school programs to community schools is likely to take several years. To a large extent, transforming 21st CCLCs into systems of community schools will depend on the ability to develop the kinds of collaborative governing bodies at the community and school site level that are able to leverage cross-sector resources and to maintain a strong and focused long-term vision.

How do leaders of 21st CCLCs move from running an after-school program to creating a community school? First, they must think beyond a single program to view the needs of children and families more comprehensively. Second, it is important to recognize that there might be other services and opportunities available to students and their families in or near the school that share a commitment to the results that the 21st CCLCs seeks; how can they become partners? Third, it is essential to keep in mind that engaging a broader array of stakeholders is critical to building constituency for the after-school program itself and to a broader vision of community schools. That constituency—parents, students, neighborhood residents, leaders of faith-based institutions, local foundations and business, and various youth development and human services agencies—can be a powerful force for change and for improving the life chances of young people.

To help 21st CCLC leaders think about how to move toward a community-school approach, resource material is provided in Appendix II. The Community-School Assessment Checklist (CSAC) is a three-part tool that contains a series of checklists to assist school and community leaders in creating and/or strengthening community-school partnerships. The CSAC was prepared jointly by two organizations:

Coalition for Community Schools
c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-822-8405
Fax: 202-872-4050
E-mail: ***blankm@iel.org***
Web site: ***www.communityschools.org***

The Coalition for Community Schools mobilizes the resources and capacity of multiple sectors and institutions to create a united movement for community schools. The

Coalition brings together over 160 local, state, and national organizations that represent individuals and groups engaged in creating and sustaining community schools, including parents, youth, community residents, teachers, principals, school superintendents and boards, youth development and community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, civic groups, higher education, business, government, and private funders. The Coalition disseminates information, connects people and resources, and educates the general public.

The Finance Project
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202-628-4200
Fax: 202-872-4050
Web site: *www.financeproject.org*

The Finance Project is a non-profit policy research, technical assistance, and information organization that was created to help improve outcomes for children, families, and communities nationwide. Its mission is to support decision making that produces and sustains good results for children, families, and communities by developing and disseminating information, knowledge, tools, and technical assistance for improved policies, programs, and financing strategies. Since its inception in 1994, The Finance Project has become an unparalleled resource on issues and strategies related to the financing of education and other supports and services for children, families, and community development.

APPENDIX I

Year One Findings and Recommendations: A Recap

Key Governance Issues	Major Recommendations
■ Membership on governing bodies is skewed toward institutions, especially the schools. There is minimal input from practitioners, clients, neighborhood residents and young people in governance deliberations.	■ Make sure that governance "gets on the screen" of 21st CCLC grantees and their community partner organizations.
■ Roles and expectations among members of governing bodies as well as advisory groups at the site level need clarification.	■ Help communities discover common ground between school district grantees and their partners.
■ Partners "own" pieces of the program instead of sharing accountability for agreed upon overall results.	■ Provide specific tools and support to help communities assess the effectiveness of their current 21st CCLC governance arrangements. Help projects identify partners involved in other major initiatives for young people and build on their "cross-over" involvement.
■ Governing bodies tend to focus more on making day-to-day management decisions rather than on making decisions to help set and achieve a long-term agenda. Turf and control problems at the operating site level are common but seldom anticipated or addressed.	■ Assist projects in finding opportunities to create "safe spaces" for partners to address sensitive issues.
■ Communication with other community decision-making groups, especially with governing bodies of partner agencies, is insufficient.	■ Work with governing bodies to design and implement a strategy for building closer relationships with school boards and the governing bodies of partner organizations.
■ Governing bodies are not focusing on collaborative policies or strategies to link students' in-school academic programs to out-of-school learning experiences.	■ Start with communities where they are and help them get where they want to go.

APPENDIX II

Strengthening Partnerships: Community School Assessment Checklist

Martin J. Blank, IEL and Barbara Hanson Langford, The Finance Project

September 2000

In many communities, partnerships between schools and other community organizations and agencies are helping to create supports that enable children and youth to learn and succeed and help families and communities to thrive. These partnerships bring together diverse individuals and groups, including principals, teachers, school superintendents, school boards, community-based organizations, youth development organizations, health and human service agencies, parents and other community leaders, to expand opportunities for children, families, and communities.

Creating a successful community school partnership is a complex, challenging, and time-consuming task. To be effective, partnerships need to engage in a thoughtful process to define a vision and clear goals. Partnerships need to have effective governance and management structures to ensure that programs operate efficiently and the partnership is responsive to community needs. Community school partnerships also need to draw from a broad range of perspectives and expertise—from inside the school as well as from other organizations and individuals within the community. Finally, community school partnerships need to connect, coordinate, and leverage resources from a variety of sources to support and continue their work.

This tool contains a series of checklists to assist school and community leaders in creating and/or strengthening community school partnerships.

- The first checklist helps you to assess the development of your community school partnership.
- The second checklist helps you to take inventory of existing programs and services in or connected to your school that support children, youth, families, and other community residents.
- The third checklist helps you to catalogue the funding sources that support these programs and services.

Once completed, these checklists can serve as a planning tool to develop strategies to strengthen your partnership, improve coordination of existing programs and services, and/or to expand current levels of support.

A. Community School Partnership Assessment

Building and maintaining effective community school partnerships requires dedicated time and ongoing attention to the collaborative process. This checklist focuses on the **process** of bringing partners together and working to achieve desired results. This checklist can help partnerships to focus on, assess, and improve the quality of their collaborative efforts.

Our partnership has developed a clear vision.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership has collaboratively identified the results we want to achieve for children, youth, families, and our community.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership has successfully engaged a broad base of partners from a range of individuals and organizations representing the school and the community.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership has developed strategies for coordinating and linking the array of supports and opportunities for children, youth, families, and community members that are available at or connected to the school.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership has established a clear organizational structure. Our partnership has agreed upon the roles that individual partners will play, and ensured that all partners understand and accept the responsibilities of those roles.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

All partners involved in our community school have an understanding of who the other partners are, what organizations they come from, and what those organizations do.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership regularly communicates with all partners to keep them informed about its work.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership engages in activities to create awareness about and increase support for the work of the partnership.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

Our partnership has identified and mobilized resources (financial and other) from partner organizations and other entities throughout the community.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Agree**

B. Community School Program and Service Checklist

An important first step for school and community leaders seeking to create or expand community school partnerships is to assess the broad range of resources that are currently available within or connected to their school. Some of these programs and services may be directly supported by the school; others may be supported by community organizations and agencies. This checklist helps you to take inventory of the programs and services already administered by the school and its partners. Once you know what programs and services exist, your challenge is to make sure these programs and services are strategically coordinated to achieve desired results and to identify new programs and services that may be needed.

SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND YOUTH					
Programs and Services	Program Administrator				If not run by the school, list name of partner
	School or School District	Community-Based Organization	Local Public Agency	Other	
Academic Enrichment/ Tutoring/Remedial Education					
Arts, Music, and Cultural Programs					
Before- and/or After-School Programs					
Community Service/ Service Learning					
Conflict Resolution					
Family Life/Personal Skills/ Teen Parenting Programs					
Literacy					
Mentoring					
Recreation/Sports					
School Nurse					
Substance Abuse and/or Violence Prevention Programs					
Other					
Other					
Other					

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COMMUNITY SUPPORTS					
Programs and Services	Program Administrator				If not run by the school, list name of partner
	School or School District	Community-Based Organization	Local Public Agency	Other	
Adult Education/ GED/ Literacy					
Parenting Education					
Health Education					
Health Care and/or Dental Services					
Early Care and Education/ Pre-K/Head Start					
Job Training					
Substance Abuse Prevention					
Violence Prevention					
Mental Health Services					
Family Support Center					
Other					
Other					
Other					
Other					

C. Community School Funding Source Assessment

Once you've taken inventory of the current programs and services operating in or connected to your school, the next step is to identify the sources of funding that support these services. In some cases, funding may come from federal, state, or local government agencies. In other cases, funding may come from private sources, such as community-based organizations or private foundations. This assessment can be used to catalogue existing funding sources that support a community school as well as to identify new funding sources to expand current programs and services.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	
School and/or School District (e.g., Title I)	
Community-Based Organizations (e.g., YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, faith-based organizations)	
Universities and Colleges (i.e. work study or service learning students, professional development training)	
Federal Funds (e.g., food and nutrition funds, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, VISTA, AmeriCorps)	
State Funds (e.g., funds from state departments of education, health and/or human services, and juvenile justice)	
City or County Funds (e.g., funds from local departments of human services, parks and recreation, and juvenile justice)	
Private Foundations (i.e. local community foundations, national foundations)	
Private Businesses	
PTA	
Participation Fees	
Other	
Other	

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Selected IEL Publications

Governance of 21st Century Community Learning Centers: First Year Findings and Recommendations, Jacqueline P. Danzberger with Atelia Melaville (March 2000). This report analyzes the governance arrangements of a subset of the original ninety-nine 21st Century grantees. It identifies the challenges to *collaborative* governance and offers specific action recommendations to strengthen governance. $5

Education and Community Building: Connecting Two Worlds, by Martin Blank, Jeanne Jehl, and Barbara McCloud (February 2001). This report focuses on ways for educators and community builders to forge common ground and engage each other in new ways to help improve student learning. It will help community school advocates understand how to work more effectively with school and community leaders. $9

Leadership for Student Learning Series. Four task force reports that identify critical issues and make recommendations for teachers, principals, district, and state leaders:

- *Reinventing the Principalship* (December 2000)
- *Restructuring School District Leadership* (February 2001)
- *Redefining the Teacher as Leader* (April 2001)
- *Recognizing the State's Role in Public Education* (May 2001)

Each report, as well as transcripts from each report's panel discussion, is available by download from IEL's Web site, or is free of charge upon written request. Visit the IEL Web site for information about other Initiative activities and upcoming reports.

Business Leaders and Communities Working Together for Change by Martin Blank and George Kaplan (July 1999). This paper looks at the efforts of 22 corporate executives to transform human services and public education systems, implement community economic development strategies an advocate for public policies that support children, families and communities. This paper provides concrete recommendations to other business people seeking to involve themselves intensively in community work, and offers advice to community leaders who wish to recruit business leaders to join their efforts. $14

Looking Forward: School-to-Work Principles and Strategies for Sustainability, by IEL Center for Workforce Development and the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) (June 2000). This collaborative report outlines ten essential principles derived from the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STWOA). These critical elements are discussed in terms of the larger school-to-work reform initiative—its evolution and impact on students, schools, and institutions. The principles focus on the following

themes: improving the school experience, expanding work-based learning opportunities, and building public/private partnerships. Also included in the report are implementation and sustainability strategies, as well as recommendations for furthering the STW initiative. $4

Requests for these publications must be received in writing by fax, e-mail, or mail, and can also be ordered on-line through IEL's Web site. To order copies, contact:

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IEL Programs of Work and Services—*In Brief*

DEVELOPING LEADERS—Leadership has long been a central commitment of IEL. Our work focuses on supporting and informing current and emerging leaders and preparing them to: work together, work effectively in multi-cultural and multi-sector environments, and work to energize and involve all stakeholders in the task of improving outcomes for children and youth.

Current Projects/Services:

- Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP)
- School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative
- Superintendents Prepared

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS—IEL works to enable communities to achieve the conditions essential to strong school, family and community relationships such as: informed, involved and organized *families*; involved *students*; *schools* with high standards and strong curriculum and instruction; effective and connected *community* organizations; and *neighborhood, faith-based, business* and *civic* organizations working in support of the schools.

Current Projects/Services:

- Coalition for Community Schools
- Systems Improvement Training and Technical Assistance Project (SITTAP)

CONNECTING AND IMPROVING THE SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUTH—IEL works to improve policies and programs for children and families by connecting policies and policy makers across systems, levels of government and ideologies. Our work provides incentives and tools to strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations to work across the boundaries of institutions, beliefs and values.

Current Projects/Services:

- IEL Policy Exchange
- National Clearinghouse on Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR)

IMPROVING PREPARATION FOR WORK—IEL's work focuses on: researching workforce and school-to-work practices and communicating the information to institutions and individuals; helping organizations develop and use skill standards to alter curricula and instructional practices; documenting how employers work with schools and training institutions; developing indicators of "best practice" programs; and identifying legislative and operating gaps, impediments, opportunities and incentives. The primary IEL division performing this work is the Center for Workforce Development (CWD).

Current Projects/Services:

- Manufacturing Industries Careers Alliance (MICA)
- School-to-Work Cooperative

Please contact us for more information about current activities or to discuss opportunities for collaboration on these or future projects. Direct inquiries to Communications Department, IEL:

- 202-822-8405 ext. 57
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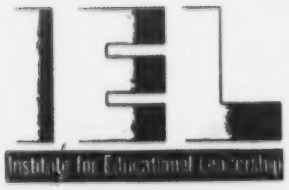

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